COLCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Colchester, CT

REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday, December 12, 2023
6:00 PM
William J. Johnston Middle School
The Commons (Black Box Theater)
360 Norwich Avenue, Colchester

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Alexander Oliphant, Secretary Margo Gignac, Michelle Millington (joined at 6:03 PM), Christopher Rivers, Stefanie Tracey-Calash

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Superintendent Daniel P. Sullivan, III, Assistant Superintendent Jessica L. Kuckel, Bacon Academy Principal Amy Begué

OTHERS PRESENT: Athletic Director Kevin Burke, Business Director Rachel Linkkila, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/Board Clerk Heather Petit, Instructional Technology Coordinator Barbara Johnson, Student Board Member Brooke Dean, Student Board Member Mariam Kasli

1. MEETING OPENING

1.1 Call to Order
Superintendent Sullivan called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM

1.2 Roll Call
Superintendent Sullivan conducted a roll call of the Board.

1.3 Pledge of Allegiance

2. *ELECTION OF OFFICERS

2.1 *Election of Board of Education Chair

Motion by: M.Gignac
To appoint Alexander Oliphant as Board of Education Chair
Second: C.Rivers
Roll call: All in favor
Vote: Motion carried

2.2 *Election of Board of Education Vice-Chair

Motion by: M.Gignac
To appoint Christopher Rivers as Board of Education Vice-Chair
Second: M.Millington
Roll call: All in favor
Vote: Motion carried

2.3 *Election of Board of Education Secretary

Motion by: C.Rivers
To appoint Margo Gignac as Board of Education Secretary
Second: S.Tracey-Calash
Roll call: All in favor
Vote: Motion carried

3. RECOGNITIONS/ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

3.1 Riley Anderson 2022-2023 All American Swimming
Athletic Director Kevin Burke congratulated Riley Anderson for all of her accomplishments in swimming. Superintendent Sullivan congratulated Riley for being named All American for 2022-2023. Bacon Academy Principal Amy Begué presented her with a plaque, and sweatshirt on behalf of the Board of Education.

3.2 Bacon Academy Girls Soccer CIAC Class M State Champions
Mr. Burke recognized the Girls Soccer team for being the Class M State Champions for 2023. Mrs. Begué presented a banner in honor of the team and sweatshirts on behalf of the Board of Education. Superintendent Sullivan congratulated the team and wished them all the best for those who will be moving on after this school year. Ms. Dolores Sawchuck and Mrs. Begué presented plaques to the Girls Soccer Team on behalf of the Bacon Academy Board of Trustees.

Margo Gignac read a letter from members of the Girls Soccer Team who were unable to attend the meeting due to an away basketball game. The Team thanked their coaches, administration, parents, Board of Education and Athletic Director Kevin Burke

3.3 Bacon Academy Carolers
The Bacon Academy Carolers sang two songs (God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen, Carol of the Bells) to highlight the holiday season. Ms. Begué, Chair Oliphant and Superintendent Sullivan thanked the carolers for performing.

4. STUDENT BOARD MEMBERS REPORT

4.1 Student Board Member Report

Mariam Kasli said that she and Brooke Dean attended the CABE conference and their take away was that they are representatives of the student body with their goal being to work directly with students to bring student concerns to the Board. Ms. Kasli thanked the Board on behalf of herself and Brooke.

5. *ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

5.1 New Agenda Items

Motion by: C.Rivers
To add Approval of Budget Transfers for Items over $5,000 as item 9.5
Second: M.Gignac
Roll call: All in favor.
Vote: Motion carried.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

6.1 For Public Comments, Please See Bylaw on Meeting Conduct
None.

7. REPORT FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

7.1. HVAC Grant Update
Mr. Sullivan spoke to the memo sent to the Board of Education and the Town in regard to applying for the HVAC grant to update Bacon Academy. The Board of Selectmen called a Special Meeting on Wednesday, December 13, 2023, to authorize the Board of Education to apply for the grant.

Mr. Sullivan discussed the need for Bacon Academy to have the HVAC system updated. Mr. Sullivan stated that Bacon Academy is the only school without air conditioning throughout and being a multi-level building with many areas without windows, it has significantly impacted student learning. Mr. Sullivan stated that on some of the warmest days of the school year, they have recorded temperatures of 84 degrees with 75% humidity. Mr. Sullivan said that some students and staff have struggled in that climate due to their health and wellness.

Mr. Sullivan stated that there is $363,730.81 in ARPA/Esser II grants that can be used to put toward the project. Superintendent Sullivan stated that in the money the project was estimated to cost approximately $1.5 million dollars; however, he learned today that the project is coming in higher and will cost approximately $2.1 million dollars. Mr. Sullivan stated that due to the increase in cost there will have to be decisions made regarding funding before the Board of Selectmen meeting.

Mr. Sullivan said that the gap of approximately $240,000 could be spread across the service plan or potentially consider taking some out of the unexpended funds account.

Superintendent Sullivan said he would be speaking to Trane to explore two different options; 1) rebuilding some of the existing equipment versus new equipment and 2) only equipment that is in most dire of work be replaced.

Ms. Millington asked about the funding from the state. Mr. Sullivan confirmed that if awarded, the state would pay approximately 60% of the project with 40% funded by Colchester. Ms. Millington asked Rachel. Linkkila about the unexpended fund balance. Mr. Rivers said there is the unexpended fund balance as well as a capital reserve account which funds have not been put into in the last several years due to budget cuts. Ms. Linkkila said the district has approximately $400,000 available in that account.

Mr. Rivers stated that in years' past the District has had a three year capital plan; however, Mr. Rivers said the District and Facilities Committee has been taking a comprehensive look at all buildings so they can have a 5-15 year outlook to know what is coming up in the future.

Mr. Sullivan said it is at the preference of the Board in regard to the presentation. Mr. Sullivan said this upcoming budget season he would like to present the operating budget (maintaining current staffing and services). and then simultaneously put forth a capital plan identifying needs of the District.

Brooke Dean said it is necessary to have air conditioning at Bacon Academy as it is taking away from students' education when they have to leave early due to heat. Ms. Dean stated that upstairs where heat rises is uncomfortable and inhibits learning.

Ms. Millington stated that it is a competitive grant and if awarded, it is a huge opportunity for the District especially when the state is funding approximately 60% of the project.

Motion by: M.Gignac
Motion to authorize Superintendent Daniel Sullivan to apply for the Bacon Academy HVAC Indoor Air Quality Grant and to use the remaining ARPA and Esser 2 funds to help fund the project.
Second: C.Rivers
Roll call: All in favor.
Vote: Motion carried.

Motion by: C.Rivers
Motion to approve the educational specifications for the Bacon Academy HVAC Indoor Air Quality Grant with the understanding that some modifications may be made tomorrow to meet funding limitations.
Second: M.Gignac
Roll call: All in favor.
Vote: Motion carried.

7.2 BA Magnet Update

Superintendent Sullivan said that Amy Begué and Ashley Zaugg have been working with the Pride and Purpose BA Magnet School Committee. Mr. Sullivan stated that the state department of educational opportunities stated that they are intrigued by the District's geographic location and they have spoken to them about space and construction of a small building (removing the portables). Mr. Sullivan stated they seemed very receptive to that to support those programs. Mr. Sullivan said the intention is to finalize the application for a BA Magnet school within the next few weeks. Superintendent Sullivan said that once submitted a short presentation will be done at the January Board Meeting. Mr. Sullivan said this is an opportunity to expand opportunities for students in Colchester and for students at Bacon Academy.

Ms. Begué said that a BA Magnet Committee meeting was held this evening. Ms. Begué stated that the Committee is working on the pathways for the magnet courses to ensure students will continue to meet requirements for a BA diploma.

Mr. Sullivan stated that out of town students attending the magnet school would be transported by and costs covered by the state. Mr. Sullivan stated there is no financial obligation from the citizens of Colchester at all.

8. *CONSENT AGENDA

8.1 *Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes of November 14, 2023

8.2 *Board of Education Retreat Minutes of November 30, 2023

Motion by: M.Gignac
To approve the consent agenda as presented
Second: C.Rivers
Roll call: All in favor.
Vote: Motion carried.

9. *PRIORITY DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

9.1 *Committee Assignments

Budget Finance Committee
Chair Oliphant appointed Christopher Rivers, Michelle Millington and himself to the committee.

Curriculum Committee
Chair Oliphant appointed Donna Antonacci, Margo Gignac and Rosemary Gignac to the committee.

Facilities Committee

Chair Oliphant appointed Christopher Rivers, Margo Gignac and Michelle Millington to the committee.

Policy Committee
Chair Oliphant appointed Donna Antonacci, Stefanie Tracey-Calash and Margo Gignac to the committee.

9.2 *School Liaisons
Chair Oliphant appointed the following Board members as school liaisons:

- Colchester Elementary School: Stefanie Tracey-Calash and Rosemary Gignac
- Jack Jackter Intermediate School: Margo Gignac and Michelle Millington
- William J. Johnston Middle School: Michelle Millington and Christopher Rivers
- Bacon Academy: Donna Antonacci and Alexander Oliphant
- Pupil Services and Special Education and CTAC: Stefanie Tracey-Calash and Rosemary Gignac

Superintendent Sullivan said that the goal of school liaisons is to support events going on in the school (academic competitions, athletic events, etc.) and he knows that the Board wants to support the schools. Superintendent Sullivan said that having a couple Board members as liaisons to a particular makes it easier for members to attend events and support students and staff. Mr. Sullivan stated that Board members may then go to other town and organization meetings and let them know what is happening in our schools which helps to partner in restoring trust and perception within the community.

9.3 Discussion on Community Liaisons
Superintendent Sullivan that as previously mentioned, Board members in the past have attended specific town and organization meetings; however, many are recorded and easily acceptable. Superintendent Sullivan said that Board members may still wish to attend town and organization meetings to speak about school happenings.

9.4 *Board of Education 2024 Meeting Calendar
Motion by: C. Rivers
To approve the to approve the 2024 Board of Education Meeting Calendar
Second: M.Gignac
Roll call: All in favor.
Vote: Motion carried.

9.5 *Approval of Budget Transfers for Items Over $5,000
Motion by: M.Millington
To approve the budget transfers for items over $5,000
Second: M.Gignac
Roll call: All in favor.
Vote: Motion carried.

10. <u>BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INFORMATION ITEMS</u>

10.1 Next Meetings

Budget Finance Meeting: Wednesday, January 3, 2024
Board of Education Regular Meeting: Tuesday, January 9, 2024

10.2 Personnel Report

Superintendent Sullivan said that we have had a series of new hires as well as resignations and retirements. Mr. Sullivan said that the District does exit interviews with all employees leaving the District to understand why they are leaving. Mr .Sullivan stated that the District is looking to hire a school nurse at Jack Jackter Intermediate School for anyone who may be interested.

10.3 Notices of Retirements/Resignations

- Bonnie Charbonnier
- Jodie LaRosa
- Erin Pagel
- Katherine Rosen
- Kathleen Sistare
- Heidi Litwin
- Aryn Davidson

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS

11.1 For Public Comments, Please See Bylaw on Meeting Conduct

None.

Mr. Rivers welcomed Stefanie Tracey-Calash to the Board of Education.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by: M.Gignac
To adjourn at 7:00 PM
Second: C.Rivers
Roll call: All in favor.
Vote: Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather R. Petit
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/Board Clerk